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## MILITARY TRAINING IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

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As a preliminary step to any discussion of the advisability of military training in secondary schools it is necessary to define the term, otherwise the expression will mean one thing to one person and a totally different thing to another. To one it means military drill in the same sense as it is used by the army officer, and includes training with a rifle, manual of arms, and close-order formation. This is a part of the type of training received by the United States regulars, or by the national guard, and has as its fundamental purpose the development of an efficient unit in a fighting machine. Others use the term in a broader sense, meaning such a development of a man's powers as shall make him capable of rendering efficient service to his country, either as a private citizen or, when this general training has been supplemented by technical drill, as an enlisted man. Those who accept the latter definition include in their interpretation of the phrase such a type of physical training as will produce healthy bodies and alert minds, with habits of obedience and self-control. Courage and patriotism are also included as essential products.

As popularly employed, military training is restricted to the first of these two interpretations and suggests that narrow vocational instruction which prepares for the life of the professional soldier. Abundant justification for this definition of the term is found in the current discussion of the question and in the various bills that have been introduced both in state and in national legislature. During the autumn of 1916, the *New York Times* printed a series of letters from the heads of preparatory schools, in which the writers expressed their opinions of the value of preparedness instruction—in the military interpretation of the term—in the various institutions which they represented. Such expressions as these abound: "I desire universal military training which shall begin with the

youths of twelve in this land and continue with men until they are well past forty"; "The boy who has had proficient military instruction in school has a vast advantage over the raw recruit"; "As a proper means of national defense the government should provide instruction, uniforms, and arms for all reputable secondary schools willing to take up military training"; "Our children must be trained for defense." These illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely, but more extended quotations are unnecessary to demonstrate that in the minds of the writers military training represents definite preparation for the life of a soldier. A similar interpretation is implied in the text of bills introduced in Congress and in the state legislature. The Chamberlain bill, introduced in the United States Senate, December 13, 1915, contains the same implication: "The training in the second period shall begin on the first day of July in which the persons liable reach the age of fourteen years and shall continue for two years. The training during this period shall be not less than ninety hours each year, ending the thirtieth day of June, and shall include military training with the rifle including gallery practice" (Senate Bill 1695, section 3 [b]). The later provisions of the section provide for a training in the third period, which includes field exercises and target practice. The Slater bill, introduced in the New York Senate, March 13, 1916, provides for military training for boys of from sixteen to nineteen years of age, for not more than 180 minutes a week after school hours, during the school term, and two weeks in camp during the summer vacation. The exact form of the training is not prescribed, but by implication it refers to military training in a narrow sense, since the Welsh bill, introduced at the same session, provides in detail for a scheme of physical training. The Pearson bill, introduced in the New Jersey legislature in 1916, was popularly supposed to provide for a strictly military form of training, and on the basis of this interpretation of its purpose, the opposition based its argument. In view of these and other excerpts which might be quoted, it would seem proper to consider the question of military training in high schools in accordance with the popular and generally accepted meaning of the term.

Several causes have led to the present widespread agitation in favor of military training for high-school boys. Among them are:

the unspeakable horrors of the present European war; America's evident lack of adequate preparation to resist aggression directed against the country by any first-class military power; the great wealth of the nation, making her a rich prize for any conqueror; the possibility of aggression on the part of some one of the great powers of the world. Two general plans have been suggested for creating the necessary military force: the first plan proposes to secure it from the adult citizenship of the country. Several methods of carrying out this scheme have been suggested. They include: (a) an adequate standing army, (b) universal military training for all able-bodied citizens, (c) federal militia, (d) state militia, (e) trained volunteer organizations. The advocates of the second plan believe that the necessary degree of protection can be best secured by military training in the public schools. No layman is competent to pass upon the comparative merits of the different methods for securing from the adult citizens of the country adequate national protection. This is the particular problem for the army expert. The average citizen is interested in the same way that he is interested in all problems of the nation which concern him directly, but he must leave the details to the profession particularly qualified to pass upon the question.

Military training for schoolboys is an entirely different proposition. Here are involved considerations, not only of preparedness, but also of the education of the youth of the country. If it should appear that military training is less effective in developing boys physically and mentally than a type of training broader in its scope, and if it should be established that military drill for schoolboys actually tends to decrease the number and efficiency of those who are willing to serve the country as soldiers, then both those who advocate this form of training and those who oppose it must reach a similar conclusion. The truth of this latter proposition is not capable of mathematical demonstration, though several significant facts appear. The military experts are generally agreed that the type of drill usually found in schoolboy organizations is useless in practical warfare. The manual of arms, wall-scaling, and close-order formations belong to the old order of things. The chief need of the army at the present time is men who are sound physically,

capable of enduring the hardships of long marches, trained to care for themselves in camp and in the trenches, and who know how to shoot and to keep their guns in working order. The high-school battalion as it exists today provides little or no training in these essential elements, and there is no reason to suppose that a wider application of the existing plan would change conditions.

The majority of physical-training experts condemn military training as a means of physical development. Dr. Sargent, of Harvard University, says: "It is not an adequate means of a physical training, being not only very limited in its activity, but actually harmful in its effects on boys less than eighteen or twenty years of age. It does not offer sufficient opportunity for the development of the individual's powers of muscles and mental co-ordination and the exercise of judgment under unusual and trying circumstances." Dr. Ehler, of the University of Wisconsin, says: "Military drill is an enthusiasm-killing, contempt-developing treadmill. Preparedness involves, primarily and fundamentally, the possession of vitality, endurance, integrity of structure, and function of every organ, alertness, bodily skill, self-control, hardihood, courage; in other words, the fullest development of the physical, mental, and emotional powers, the result of real physical education. Let us not confound drill with training, nor substitute military drill for physical education." Experience indicates that military drill for schoolboys actually tends to decrease the number of enlistments in the national guard. A captain of a company in the national guard in New York state opposed the formation of a high-school cadet corps on the ground that none of the boys would afterward enlist in the local company. Boston, with compulsory military drill in the high schools for fifty years, has fewer enlistments in the United States army than any other similar population area in the United States. The almost universal testimony from institutions where military drill is one of the requirements for graduation is that the men detest the monotony of the drills and seek to evade the requirements in every possible way. The frequent disbandment of voluntary cadet corps in high schools testifies to the monotony of the work and to its failure to offer any permanent attraction to the young. Military authorities are by no means

united in their advocacy of such training for boys of high-school age. General Leonard Wood has recently said: "Personally, I do not believe we should give the training until the year in which the youth becomes nineteen." Baden-Powell declares in an epigrammatic sentence: "Drill the schoolboy and spoil the soldier." If this country is sincerely seeking a state of effective preparedness, it cannot afford to ignore the experience of those European countries which have made military service of adults universal and compulsory. Among those nations in which everything is subordinated to the creation of an effective fighting machine it has in every instance been considered inexpedient and unwise to resort to the military training of high-school boys. Why, then, should our own country seek to impose upon minors, who, as dependents, are unable to refuse such training, a requirement which adult citizens shrink from accepting for themselves? Such a policy would seem fraught with the grave danger of lulling the nation to a sense of false security, leading its citizens to depend for defense upon the superficial training of large numbers while the real substance of preparedness is lacking.

Among other schemes for military training of boys the so-called "Wyoming Plan" has been widely heralded by newspapers and popular magazines. A careful study of this scheme by personal visitation indicates that it is a misnomer to call it a state plan. True, it has received the official sanction of the state legislature by the appropriation of state funds to the extent of \$1,000 to assist pupils in the purchase of uniforms, but the appropriation of a small sum of money can hardly be said to constitute a state plan of training. At the present time not more than three hundred boys are enrolled in the various cadet corps, and the greatest diversity exists in the methods employed in the various towns. Such a condition is inevitable when it is understood that in the entire state but one city has a physical director and military instructor. In every other instance the work is carried on by one of the regular teachers who is given a small increase in his regular salary for directing the work. In one city the initiative in establishing a cadet corps was taken by the Board of Education, who directed, as a protest against the extravagance in dress of the high-school

pupils, that all students, both boys and girls, should wear uniforms. For the boys this was the naval uniform, and for the girls middy blouses and plain blue skirts. In Wyoming student interest in drills follows the same course as has been shown in other states in which high-school battalions have been formed. In one city, after two years' existence the corps was disbanded because of lack of interest on the part of the pupils, and the rifles were shipped back to Washington. In another, after the squads reached a high degree of proficiency in wall-scaling—which is simply an athletic stunt—the boys became tired of practice, and the work was discontinued. Still another city stresses the manual of arms and platoon drill for the small squad of thirty-five boys who take the work. In this instance most of the boys are unprovided with uniforms. Little evidence was found of any practical results from the appointment of girls as sponsors for the various squads. As a rule, no sponsors have been appointed for the current year, and in the few places where they were found their function seemed to be largely social. Careful inquiry was made among superintendents, principals, and teachers relative to the effect of this form of training upon the moral attitude of the pupils. General agreement was found that the Wyoming boys are true to type, and that the same vigilance on the part of teachers is necessary to prevent smoking and to maintain high standards of moral conduct as is found essential in conducting athletics in the average high school. It is impossible to view with complacency the social cleavage resulting from any scheme of military training restricted in its application to pupils of the secondary school. The best available evidence indicates that a comparatively small proportion of the pupils enrolled complete the high-school course. To impose the burden of national defense in this way upon a small minority is utterly repugnant to the democratic ideal. It is true that many of the boys not in the high school are engaged either in self-support or in the support of dependent relatives, but it is equally true that many a high-school boy is bearing the same burden.

It is difficult to avoid the inference that the supporters of the military training idea see in the school a convenient organization for carrying out the plan, and that consequently they follow the

all too common practice of placing the responsibility upon the already overburdened school system. Should it seem wise to make military training compulsory for boys of the high school, if required at all, it should apply to all boys of prescribed ages and physical condition. Unless this is done, plainly any boy who so desires may escape the obligation by the simple expedient of leaving school, and in this way the present tendency to leave school before the completion of the course will be aggravated. The moral virtues of obedience, patriotism, and self-sacrifice are no more desirable for the soldier than for anyone else. They are qualities which should be possessed by every upright, useful citizen, and the school is failing in its manifest duty unless it already has as its fundamental aim the development of these essential virtues.